EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH BAND INSIDERS

SPECIAL EDITION

CRITICAL REVIEWS OF FOUR STUDIO ALBUMS

MUSIC LEGENDS

THE ROCK ICONS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

THE INSIDE STORY OF ROCK'S GREATEST NAMES

PINK FLOYD

THE FINAL CUT TO THE ENDLESS RIVER

FOLLOW THE PINK FLOYD JOURNEY FROM 1983 TO PRESENT

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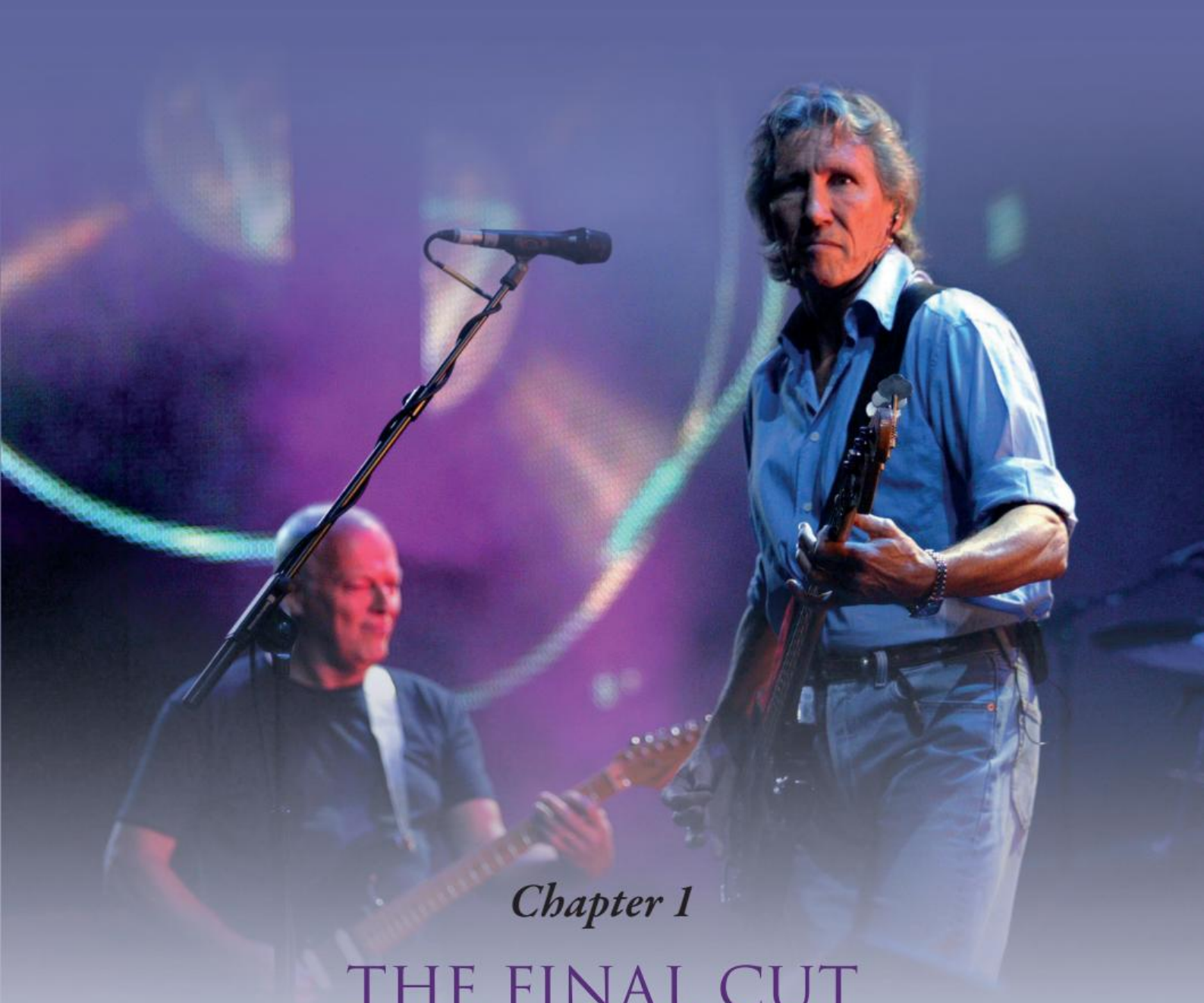


Chapter 1

THE FINAL CUT

With the departure of Richard Wright, Pink Floyd began the eighties as a three piece but Roger Waters was now the real power in the band. The disproportionate split in control was evident in the next album, *The Final Cut*, released in March 1983.

The over-riding impression from this ill favoured outing is of a Roger Waters' solo album. *The Final Cut* dwells on the politics and social landscape of Britain in the early 1980s. The focus is incredibly narrow and could almost be lifted from an editorial meeting at *The Guardian*, Roger's newspaper of choice. The listener inevitably gets the distinct impression that we are recycling the same thematic and

musical landscape of *The Wall*. In a few cases this was literally true, as Dave Gilmour later confirmed some of the pieces which found their way on to *The Final Cut* had already been rejected for *The Wall*. The album had originally been prepared under the working title *Spare Bricks*. In the accompanying *Final Cut* video EP the late Alex McAvoy was even asked to reprise his role of the School Teacher from *The Wall*. In the video EP the teacher character is depicted in his unhappy retirement.

Overseas audiences were somewhat mystified by the parochial subject matter of *The Final Cut* especially songs like *Not Now John* which dealt with industrial landscape of Thatcher's Britain. The intensely bitter tone of the lyrics did little to help, but the album has far greater structural faults in musical terms. With David Gilmour relegated to the role of hired hand in a Roger Waters obsessed universe there were none of the flashes of instrumental genius which had made *The Wall* such a complete package. The atmosphere of the album is relentlessly downbeat and with no melodic or instrumental relief the darkness and bitterness are overwhelming.

There is also the constant all pervading feeling that we are revisiting exactly the same thematic and musical landscape as *The Wall*. With its exploration of the damaging effect of the sacrifices made in war we are very much stuck in the same territory as *The Wall*. Even the photograph on the album sleeve with the soldier holding film cans who has been cleanly knifed in the back has been widely interpreted as a reference to Roger's frustrations over the creation of *The Wall* movie. The Hipgnosis partnership had been dissolved but Storm Thorgeson was still very active as a designer and film maker. Roger chose not to employ Storm and instead embarked on a self-designed sleeve.

Not Now John is the only place on the album where the tempo lifts . The song deals with the indifferent attitudes of those who were too oblivious to care about the subjects which troubled Waters so deeply, but it could almost have served as an anthem for all the Floyd

fans bored and disillusioned by the relentless diet of earnestness and yearning for an injection of instrumental genius to lighten the mood. The album is a Roger Waters solo album in all but name: 'the rest of us just sort of drifted into it' said Nick Mason. The over-riding impression from this ill favoured outing is tension and conflict. Waters had enjoyed the lion's share of the creative input on the previous two albums and carried out those tasks with great aplomb. Sadly, *The Final Cut* fails to live up to its legendary predecessor in any respect.

The album had in fact started out as a band project but Gilmour soon discovered that his input was unwelcome which was the start of a long period of friction which ultimately saw the guitarist relinquish his producer's credit, but not his producer's royalties.

In May 1983, *Sounds* ran an interview with David Gilmour in which it is not too difficult to read between the lines to see the discontent beneath the surface. 'It's very, very much Roger's baby, more than anyone has been before, it's not the way I'd have produced it and we did have an argument about the production on this record, several arguments, and I came off the production credits because my ideas of production weren't the way that Roger saw it being. Obviously the way it is, is the way Roger wanted it to be. It's very, very good, but it's not personally how I would see a Pink Floyd record going. The sound quality is very good, it's very, very well recorded, and the string arrangements and orchestral stuff are very well done. But it's not me. Consequently, I was arguing about how to make the record at the beginning, and it was being counterproductive. We diverge quite a lot. But we do still just about manage to work together. And we still have got things that we can contribute to each other. I think the thing with Rick was that he didn't have anything that any of us felt was contributing to what Pink Floyd do in any way.'

The early 1980s were also a troubled time for the Hipgnosis partnership, which had recently been dissolved in the wake of

Richard Wright left the band after touring *The Wall* in 1981. He rejoined the band as a session player in 1987 for *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*, and rejoined full time for *The Division Bell* in 1994.

problems caused by major overspends on a video shoot. Nonetheless Storm Thorgeson was very much active as a designer. His difficulties were not helped by Roger passing over Storm's new design team in order to design the sleeve himself. The design depicted the medal ribbon of a British war veteran and part of a poppy in close up. This was the first Pink Floyd sleeve to feature the band's name since Ummagumma eleven years earlier and is as uninspired as the music.

THE MUSIC

The Post War Dream (Waters)
The militarily brassy scene-setter name checks the Atlantic Conveyor, a ship sunk by the Argentines in the Falklands War, which had just ended. The song references the fact that its replacement was to be built in Japan – an enemy, of course, in a previous conflict.

Your Possible Pasts (Waters)
A *Wall* contender, saved for future re-use, includes chilling sound effects resembling the 'cattle trucks' used to take Nazi concentration-camp victims to their doom.

One of the Few (Waters)
Continuing the theme of warfare, *The Few* of the title refers to the RAF Fighter Command pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain in 1940. The pilots got their name from a famous Winston Churchill wartime speech: 'Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few.'

The Hero's Return (Waters)
The Hero (or central character) reflects on his war experiences. An extra final verse and chorus for this song turned up on the twelve-

inch single version of *Not Now John*, identified as *The Hero's Return Part II*.

The Gunner's Dream (Waters)
This was one of 'three good tracks' that Gilmour identified (the others being *The Fletcher Memorial Home* and the title track) from a release that he had publicly stated he 'didn't think was a good album.' Raf 'Baker Street' Ravenscroft is the sax-player.

Paranoid Eyes (Waters)
A highly orchestrated number reflecting the Hero's fears ends the first vinyl side of *The Final Cut* on a very downbeat note. The 'brown and mild' of the lyric puzzled overseas listeners who were unaware that this was a reference to a mix of beer which had been a favourite with the war generation.

Get Your Filthy Hands off My Desert (Waters)
In echoes of *Money*, a missile moves from speaker to speaker in an impressive sound effect to open side two. This is followed, in complete contrast, by Waters singing over a string section. The lyrics are infinitely better than the music.

The Fletcher Memorial Home (Waters)
The title refers to Waters' father, Eric Fletcher Waters, who was killed in action in 1944 and whose demise was re-visited in *The Wall* movie song *When the Tigers Broke Free*. Both these titles were included on *Echoes – The Best of Pink Floyd* in late 2001 after some poker-style bargaining on the track listing between Gilmour and Waters.

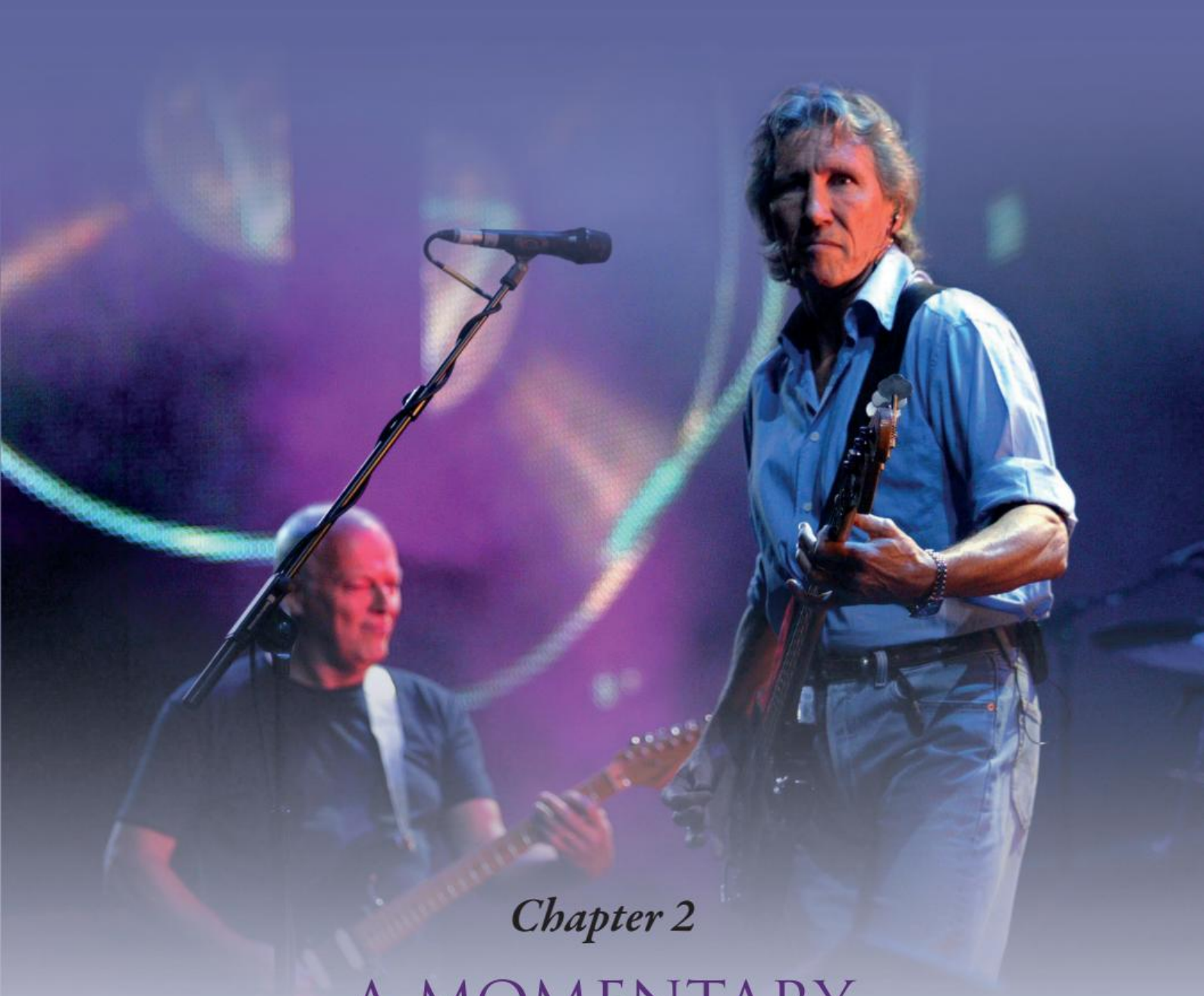
Southampton Dock (Waters)
Roger Waters pinpointed this song, depicting a war widow (mirroring his own mother?) waving the troopships away to the

Falklands, as a personal highlight of the album. Lyrically it's a masterpiece but again is let down by the lack of musical light and shade.

Final Cut (Waters)
The final repeated line of the chorus, 'Oh Maggie, Maggie – what have we done' refers to Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, recently responsible for sending troops to reclaim the Falklands from Argentina. Far too much of it's time for most and too political for many others, this track dates the album to the politics of Britain in the early 1980s and makes it difficult to appreciate in current times.

Not Now John (Waters)
Released in censored form as a single in May 1983, the line 'fuck all that' becoming 'stuff all that', this became an unlikely hit – the Floyd's fifth UK chart single in sixteen years. Waters described it as 'a very schizophrenic song,' saying he identified with the character singing who was 'irritated by all the whining and the moaning about how desperate things are.' But then a second voice enters...

Two Suns in the Sunset (Waters)
The second sun in the title here is the fireball of a nuclear explosion, as Roger Waters contemplates the moment the fabled 'button' is finally pushed. In 1983 the real possibility of Mutually Assured Destruction was in the minds of many. A suitably dismal conclusion to a downbeat album which lived down to its title.



Chapter 2

A MOMENTARY LAPSE OF REASON

Despite all the success Pink Floyd had enjoyed, in 1986 Roger Waters was far from happy behind the scenes. In particular he had grown to mistrust Steve O'Rourke's judgement as the manager of the band and now sought to terminate his management agreement with O'Rourke.

Roger had one eye on his projected solo career and he was astute enough to recognise that any future solo work under the Roger Waters banner would always be regarded as a filler marking time before the release of the main event in the form of the next Pink

Floyd album. As always, Roger had thrown his heart and soul into the creation and touring of *The Pros and Cons of Hitch Hiking* but the public reaction had been confused and overshadowed by requests for information on the next Floyd project. Roger had clearly taken advice on how to resolve the issue, but he seems to have received some of the worst counsel in history.

In order to assist his campaign to terminate his deal with O'Rourke Roger was advised to write to EMI and CBS records stating that he would no longer record with Mason, Gilmour or Pink Floyd.

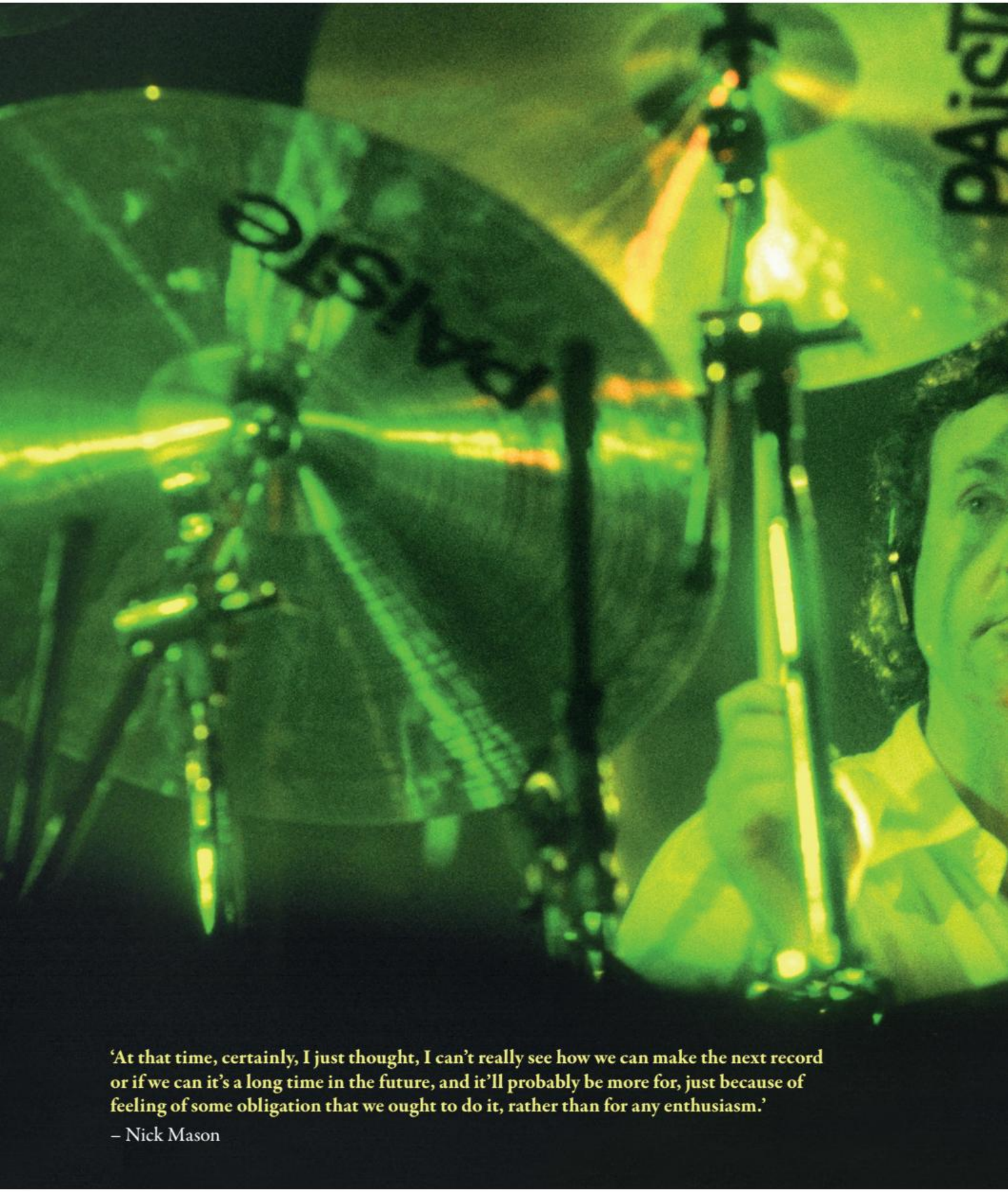
The implausible logic of the ill-conceived scheme seems to have run along the following lines; if Pink Floyd was to be dissolved O'Rourke's managerial function would also be at an end leaving Roger to carry on with his solo career without the spectre of Pink Floyd haunting his every step. The master plan however seems to have made no provision whatsoever for the wishes of the other members. The entire plan seems to have all hinged on Gilmour and Mason simply rolling over and agreeing that Waters was the sole creative force in the band and that without him Pink Floyd was officially and very legally dead.

In retrospect it is almost unbelievable that such an unlikely scheme could be considered workable, but somehow Roger's advisors seem to have convinced him that there was a chance that the plan could actually succeed in all its hare-brained glory. Consequently in October 1986 Roger's legal team trooped into the High Court and began their attempt to have the Pink Floyd partnership wound down on the dubious grounds that without his input the band was a spent creative force. The great Roger Waters had after all given notice that he would no longer record with Pink Floyd and it was now formally moved that the court should declare that the band should be officially dissolved and that furthermore no-one should be allowed to use the name.

Roger's legal team backed up their court assault with a PR campaign which involved setting out their warped reasoning for

the benefit of the press. The *Daily Mail* was just one of the many nationals in October 1986 that gave the case extensive coverage, but right from the outset it is clear that the writer was far from convinced. 'Without consulting his former colleagues, Pink Floyd co-founder Roger Waters, has just made a High Court application to finally kill off the super group, which is reputed to have sold more records than even the Beatles. Bass guitarist Waters wants to prevent the name from being used again and a spokesman says 'Roger believes the group has become a spent force creatively. This should be recognised and if the group splits up there is always the question of who retains the rights to the name. This action will avoid any misunderstandings because the band Pink Floyd will then no longer exist."

Tellingly The *Mail* article contained the observation 'It is not clear if the others will defend the action.' All of this seems to have come as a major surprise to Gilmour and Mason. Their first reaction was to issue a press statement of their own which simply said 'Pink Floyd are alive and well and recording in England.' The next stage was to mount a proper legal defence. In reality this presented little real difficulty, as it was obvious to all but the most biased observer that the incumbent Floyd's could not be prevented from working and were almost certain to emerge triumphant. Much to Roger's surprise Gilmour and Mason declared that they did indeed intend to soldier on without him. They made it clear they had no intention of retiring and felt they were still entitled to use the all important Pink Floyd brand name. Clearly the remaining Floyd members were in the driving seat and it soon became obvious that Roger had a legal mountain to climb. In order to strengthen their claim further, Gilmour and Mason also brought a rehabilitated Rick Wright back into the fold. This had to be done with a great deal of care as it was now apparent that a clause in Wright's leaving agreement prevented him from re-joining the band. There were also tax considerations and the resultant album erred on the side of caution by printing



'At that time, certainly, I just thought, I can't really see how we can make the next record or if we can it's a long time in the future, and it'll probably be more for, just because of feeling of some obligation that we ought to do it, rather than for any enthusiasm.'

– Nick Mason

a 'band' picture featuring Gilmour and Mason only, with Wright credited as a side-man only.

As the legal battle dragged on, Gilmour reluctantly moved on to the attack and in conversation with Nicky Horne of London's Capital Radio in October 1987 he spelled out his sense of frustration and the heavy heart with which he was drawn in to all of this nonsense. 'I think it's rather unnecessary. There's been many many years together when we have achieved a lot together, and it's a shame when anyone wants to leave of course. But, everyone has to do what they want to do, and of course that's their decision. What is sad and unnecessary about it is trying to prevent anyone else from carrying on with their legitimate artistic and business endeavours.'

The outcome was exactly as predicted, no court in the world would have stopped the remaining Floyd members from pursuing their careers and Waters was forced into an embarrassing climb down, which allowed him to release the *When the Wind Blows* soundtrack on Virgin Records in return for giving up all claims to the Pink Floyd name.

Roger's advice had been truly disastrous and had resulted in his losing the very thing he sought to protect, as David Gilmour later explained to Capital Radio's Nicky Horn. 'EMI made him sign a piece of paper on the case saying essentially, if you want to put this soundtrack out on another label, not to interfere with Pink Floyd being Pink Floyd, or pursue any activities in the name of Pink Floyd – which Roger agreed to.'

It was now that Floyd embarked on one of the most crucial albums in the band's career.

Gilmour and Mason had been sketching out ideas together since October 1986 but there was clearly more than a grain of truth in Roger's claim that the band was a spent force creatively. Without a doubt the Gilmour/Mason axis was struggling to deliver the goods and all the stops had to be pulled out in the form of eighteen additional musicians plus co-writers in abundance and of course

the return of Bob Ezrin. Ezrin rubbed salt into Waters wounds by rejecting the proposal that he should work on *Radio KAOS* in favour of the album which ultimately emerged as *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*. There was a huge appetite for Pink Floyd's music and a colossal amount of goodwill. The fans really wanted something which sounded like the Floyd of old and sensing the mood, David Gilmour after an immense effort was able to produce an album that just about passed muster.

Recording was completed in March 1987 after seven months work, but there was a further three months of post production work before the album was finally declared complete. It had certainly been a difficult birth and the album had gone through numerous incarnations including a tentative stab at a concept album, which had been worked up between Gilmour and Eric Stewart of 10cc fame. Eventually the idea of a concept album was abandoned and for the first time since *Meddle*, Pink Floyd unveiled an album comprising a number of diverse compositions with no overall theme to glue the whole work together.

The estranged Roger Water's notoriously dismissed the album as a 'facsimile' of the Floyd sound. The fans reaction may well have been positive over all, but musically the album only just passed the quality threshold, the few stand out tracks were outweighed by the make weights but in quality terms the album was just about good enough.

The music may have been mediocre but the presentation of the album was world class. Storm Thorgeson's Hipgnosis partnership had been dissolved after being dropped for both *The Wall* and *The Final Cut*, but Gilmour was keen to re-establish the link with the designer who was so readily associated with Floyd's greatest work. Storm repaid the compliment by producing some of his best ever work and pulled out all the stops with a breathtaking sleeve and an arresting series of promotional films including an ambitious take on *Learning to Fly* set in the plains of Canada.

Pink Floyd promotional films had come a long way since *Point Me at the Sky* had failed so miserably as a single but it's interesting to note that 20 years on *Learning to Fly* tackled the same subject matter as *Point Me at the Sky* with an equal lack of success in the charts. It seems that the singles buying public just don't warm to songs about the hobbies of rich millionaires. The lesson seems to be that flying is a wonderful and exhilarating experience for those involved, but a somewhat less edifying subject for the average earthbound singles buyer. Despite this minor disappointment, on the whole the reaction of the fans remained positive. With Waters now out of the band Gilmour was determined to carry on. Having overcome the legal obstacles placed in his way the album had to be superb. It wasn't. It was a long way short of being a world-beater; but crucially it felt like a Floyd album and in any event it was certainly superior to *The Final Cut*.

Even Gilmour admitted this was not the best Pink Floyd album ever made, but as he truthfully asserted 'I gave it the best damn shot I could.' It was well received by the Floyd fan base and laid the seeds for the colossal concerts which saw the Floyd juggernaut eclipse Roger Waters solo career. The absent Waters huffily proclaimed that it was little more than an artful facsimile of Pink Floyd. In conversation with David Fricke for *Rolling Stone* in October 1987 Water's expanded further on the new album. 'I think it's a very facile, but quite clever forgery. If you don't listen to it too closely it does sound like Pink Floyd. It's got Dave Gilmour playing guitar. And with the considered intention of setting out to make something that sounds like everyone's conception of a Pink Floyd record, it's inevitable that you will achieve that limited goal. I think the songs are poor in general. The lyrics I can't believe.'

Fricke himself was far more generous when it came to giving his own views on the album in the same *Rolling Stone* article. 'The album is aurally sumptuous and texturally seductive lacking the strident pedagogical edge of *The Wall* or *The Final Cut* which will

be reassuring to anyone who was spellbound by the glacial grandeur of *Meddle* or the extended instrumental passages of *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*. With *On the Turning Away* Floyd may also have a hit single of *Money* proportions. A caressing ballad with a glowing chorus and climactic Gilmour guitar, it is more openly hopeful and loving than anything Waters allowed himself to write for the Floyd.'

THE MUSIC

Signs of Life (Gilmour/Ezrin)
With Gilmour's intention 'to show the world look, we're still here!' after Waters' departure, one would expect the first track to be a real statement of intent. Perverse to the end, the Floyd went with the sound of a rowing boat and Nick Mason's voice atop guitar and synth backing. The album was nearly called *Signs of Life* but changed late on, much to the chagrin of pen-sharpening music writers for whom it would have been a gift from the gods: 'No Signs of Life from Floyd!

Learning to Fly (Gilmour/Moore/Ezrin/Carin)
A fine slice of the new, radio-friendly Pink Floyd, co-written with (among others) Jon Carin, a keyboard player who, Gilmour says, 'can do Rick Wright better than Rick can.' By the end of the tour supporting this album, Wright had regained the self-confidence Gilmour claimed had been eroded under the previous regime.

The Dogs of War (Gilmour/Moore)
Lyricist Anthony Moore borrowed this title from thriller novelist Frederick Forsyth, who himself purloined it from William Shakespeare. The subject-matter is not Julius Caesar, however, but Forsyth's mercenary soldiers. Saxophone is contributed by Scott Page.

Pink Floyd promote the upcoming tour in support of *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*. The tour ran from September 1987 to August 1988, and was the band's first since The Wall tour in 1981. The tour was also the first without Roger Waters.

Pubbing?

One Slip (Gilmour/Manzanera)
Long-time friend and former Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera was Gilmour's collaborator here – and unusually Gilmour is the wordsmith of the partnership. Indeed, a phrase from this would name the album which, as previously mentioned, bore the working title of *Signs of Life*. *One Slip* was also the third single to be released.

On the Turning Away (Gilmour/Moore)
The almost folky, unaccompanied introduction to this song soon proves misleading as it opens out into more typical Floyd. Second single from the album, an Atlanta-recorded live version being a CD/12-inch bonus.

Yet Another Movie/Round and Around (Gilmour/Leonard)
Less a two-part song as one with an instrumental play out, not to mention movie snippets from Messrs Brando (*On the Waterfront*) and Bogart/Bergman (*Casablanca*). Co-writer Pat Leonard was an American keyboardist/producer/songwriter hitherto best-known for work with Madonna.

A New Machine (Part 1) (Gilmour)
No relation to *Welcome to The Machine*, this shares its non-human like qualities with a disembodied vocal treated with a decoder. This track never really gets going musically, but nevertheless stays in the memory as a kind of primal scream.

Terminal Frost (Gilmour)
An instrumental apart from the odd wordless vocal that gave Gilmour the time and space to etch his trademark guitar patterns on the windscreen. Sparkling sax and keyboards enliven the middle section but the track begins to overstay it's welcome soon after.

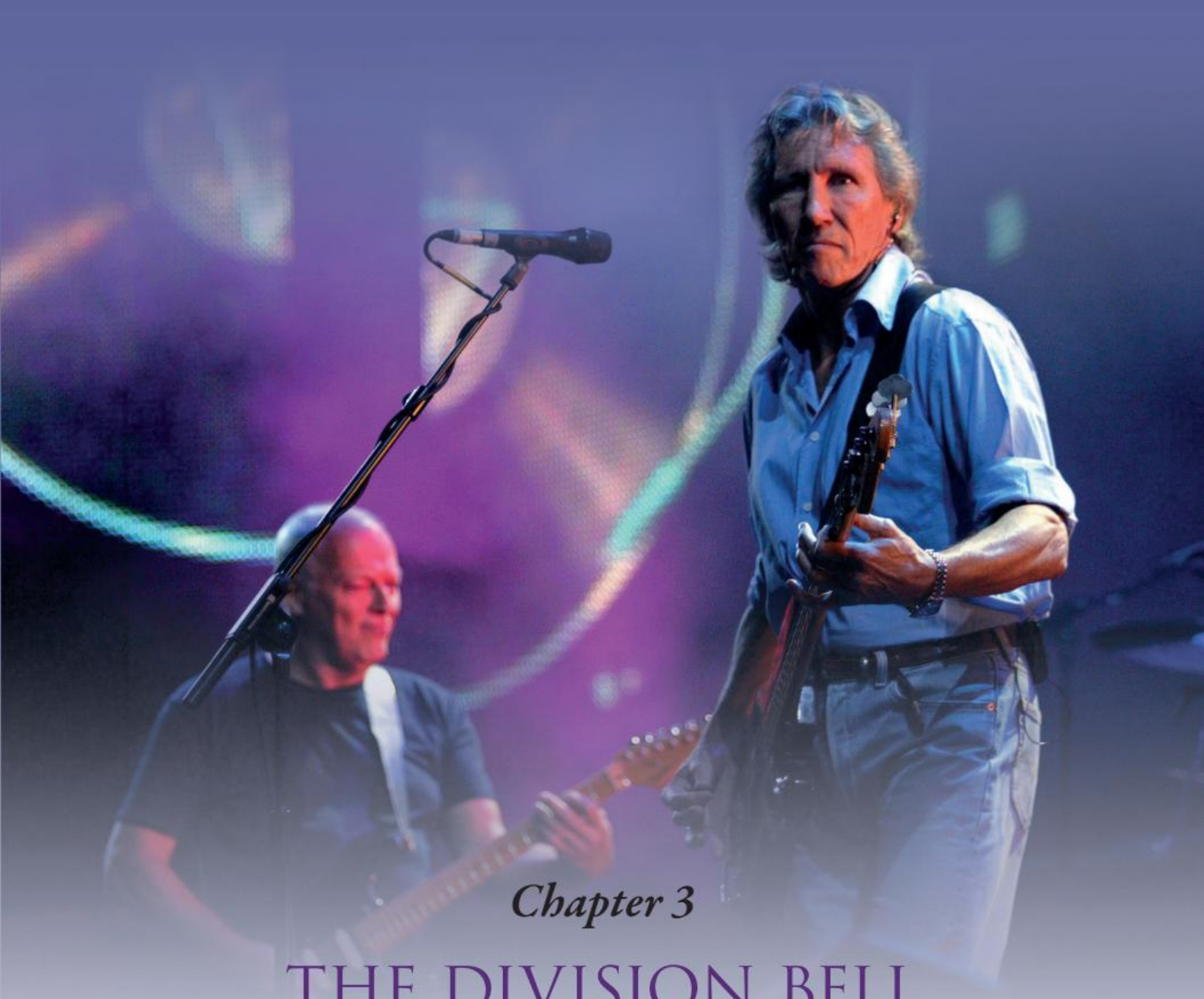
A New Machine (Part 2) (Gilmour)
An unremarkable bookend for the unremarkable *Terminal Frost* instrumental.

Sorrow (Gilmour)
The album's longest track and one of its more substantial songs. Unusually, Gilmour not only began with a lyric but wrote it himself. The theme of broken promises leads to an automatic connection with Roger Waters (denied, as ever, by Gilmour), but a mighty guitar solo from the maestro closes the album on a satisfying note. =

Regardless of the over all quality of the new material, the tour proved a huge success and spawned the live album *The Delicate Sound of Thunder*. The film of the tour was also released on video. The film fails to capture the magnificence of the stage show and compared to the intimate earthy qualities of the Pompeii film the proceedings feel cold and distant. There is a clinical air to the proceedings and despite all of the thought and craft which went into the film there is a distinct impression that the events lack soul. Robert Christgau and Carola Dibbel reviewed the film for the American magazine *Video Review* and neatly encapsulated the problems with this particular film. 'We had hopes for Pink Floyd's concert video even though we're not fans of their recent music. This was the model art-school band, and through psychedelic overload, studio obsession, and interpersonal abuse they'd retained their flair for the visual. Their graphic intelligence (especially in the great Hipgnosis covers of the 1970s) is unequalled in rock, and they've always had a sense of spectacle – concocting mammoth animations and vast props where workaday rockers posture inanely in the eye of the arena. Perhaps, we thought, they'd defeat the contradictions of the concert-video form as well. But instead they succumb to them. Since the mid-1980s, the rest of the band has been at odds with one-time front man Roger Waters, and the 1987 tour video documentary was designed

to show that Floyd didn't need *Another Brick in The Wall*. But like the album it promoted, which contributes five consecutive songs to a disastrously dreary opening, all it proved was that guitarist David Gilmour couldn't write Waters' grocery list. Singing has been less of an issue – Floyd's stately, impersonal music doesn't call for much emotion or timbre or melodic acuity. But in concert, it's always lived or died with the visuals, and the enormous, slow-moving effects that complement the songs' ersatz grandeur live are impossible to reproduce on a television screen. Musicians and audience here are better-shot than is customary, and while the filmic distractions provided – South African clips under *Us and Them*, lost-in-an-endless-corridor imagery – are tinged with Floyd's usual pretensions, they certainly look good. It's just that video scale trivialises them – or else makes clear that there wasn't much behind them to begin with. We don't know which, and we don't care. Pink Floyd's audience is now a kind of permanent megacult. *Delicate Sound of Thunder* is for their eyes only.'

At the conclusion of the Delicate Sound of Thunder tour the band took a well earned rest. As Gilmour triumphantly declared to *Q* magazine in September 1990, 'We wanted to leave no-one in any doubt that we were still in business and meant business-and no one was going to stop us.' With the album and tour Pink Floyd had proved they could still make memorable music and more than hold their own in the live arena. The task now was to produce an album that was worthy of their legacy.



Chapter 3

THE DIVISION BELL

A *Momentary Lapse of Reason* had firmly re-established Pink Floyd as a global force, however it clearly did not represent the band's best work. The next album addressed that criticism after one of the longest gestation periods in the history of rock music. In 1994, after a seven year wait, Pink Floyd were at last ready to unveil their new album. There was certainly a great deal at stake. At this rate of output it was clear to many that this could well be the last Floyd album, and the band had yet to produce an album which stood comparison with the best of the Roger Waters era. If the Floyd were indeed to go out on a high the results had to be convincing and to a large extent they were.

Gilmour went on record as saying he is unwilling to 'lift that weight again, so this looked likely to be the Floyd swan-song at the time.

The Division Bell was a genuine group effort with all three musicians gelling brilliantly in the studio where they were again re-united with Bob Ezrin, the architect of their greatest triumphs now guesting as a musician. Released in April 1994 *The Division Bell* was an altogether superior effort. Careful, studied and mannered the album flows together as a suite of songs. There are no dramatic dynamic peaks and troughs or extremes of tempo but the smooth majestic flow of the music worked it's magic on audiences on both sides of the Atlantic, and for the first time in history Pink Floyd had an album which went to number one in both Britain and America.

The theme of this album, the second post-Waters studio venture, was non-communication, 'but,' insisted Dave Gilmour in a 1995 interview with *Mojo*, 'we're not trying to bash anyone over the head with it.' Frankly this is not an album which is likely to bash anyone over the head with anything. There is a pleasant ethereal drifting quality to the whole record which seems to echo the gentle currents of the River Thames echoing against the sides of the Astoria, the converted houseboat where the album was conceived.

The recording process began in 1993 aboard the Astoria which was now converted into a studio and moored permanently on the River Thames. Gilmour had recently undergone the trauma of a divorce, and journalist Polly Sampson, his new wife-to-be, contributed a great deal of the lyrics; an input which Gilmour has described as invaluable but which was dismissed by a still bitter Roger Waters as, 'too Spinal Tap for words.'

There is a strong argument to suggest that, when creating the artwork for *The Division Bell* Storm Thorgerson saved the best for last. Distinctive, striking, enigmatic and superbly realised, *The Division Bell* is everything that a Pink Floyd sleeve should be. The perfect visual compliment to a great album.

With a really fine album under their belt it was now time for Floyd to get back out on the road and demonstrate that the group were not only masters of the recording studio they were also masters of the live arena. The stunning impact of *The Delicate Sound of Thunder* still reverberated around the music world. In the course of over 200 concerts Floyd had played to over 4.25 million fans grossing in the region of £80 million in combined tickets and merchandise sales. Trailing in the wake of Pink Floyd, lesser artists such as U2 had attempted to produce a similar level of spectacle, but they would never be able to aspire to Pink Floyd for musical content. Nonetheless in terms of rock shows, by 1994 the bar had been set very high indeed. Pink Floyd were about to demonstrate once again that they were innovators and visionaries when it came to the live arena. This was the brand which set the bench mark for a whole industry and Gilmour was well aware of the overwhelming responsibility to a powerful legacy which demanded that each Pink Floyd tour was not just better than the last but also better than everyone else in the rock world.

To ensure that the shows were bigger and better than anything which had ever been seen in the rock world Pink Floyd re-enlisted the help of designer Mark Fisher and brought back lighting designer Marc Brickman. In a nod to the roots of the band Floyd had re-introduced Astronomy Domine into the set and even called on the services of Peter Wyne-Wilson who had created the liquid ink patterns which had entranced audiences in their UFO days. For this amazing run of shows it was initially agreed that there would be no such thing as a budget. If the spectacle demanded it then Floyd would provide it. The demands of the show soon grew to encompass a series of new 35mm animated films mixed with live action films especially commissioned from Storm Thorgerson. The list of equipment needed soon grew to epic proportions incorporating a massive steel supporting arch, robotic moving lights, 40 foot projection screen, 400 Vari-Lights, 300 loud speakers, a 70mm Imax Front projector,

35mm rear projector and the latest coloured light laser projectors. All of the gear took three aircraft to transport and these were the largest aircraft in the skies, two 747s and one Russian Antonovv freighter. The show required a staff of 200 to operate the myriad of visual effects which were perfectly synchronised to the music produced by a troupe of 11 musicians. Together all of this combined to deliver the ultimate concert experience to a combined audience of 5.3 million concert goers.

With the enormous scale of the production even the Floyd began to get nervous. As the bills continued to mount, at the urging of Steve O'Rourke, and a tour sponsor was drafted in. Volkswagen, the German car manufacturer, was delighted to be associated with a tour which so closely fitted their target audience. Although the financial input was undoubtedly welcome, Gilmour was unhappy having to bow and scrape to the men in suits. As he told *Mojo* in 1995, 'not having thought it through entirely, I didn't want them to be able to say they have a connection with Pink Floyd, that they are part of our success. We will not do it again.'

Despite the reservations Gilmour may have had, Volkswagen undeniably now had more than just a 'connection' with Pink Floyd. Nick Mason had a hand in designing the interior for the Pink Floyd Special Edition VW Golf which went on sale to coincide with the tour. All 5.3 million tickets also bore the legend 'Volkswagen presents Pink Floyd In Concert'. But although Gilmour had his concerns, none of this seems to have bothered the fans one bit, they recognised that they were privileged to witness the most imposing rock spectacle ever mounted against the backdrop of the finest rock music ever composed... and all for just twenty-five quid.

The show itself included the psychedelic delights of *Astronomy Domine* from *Piper at the Gates of Dawn* and early concerts also included a sublime rendition of *Echoes* (although the band soon tired of the piece and replaced it with the more familiar *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*) besides a generous sprinkling of the new album and

Pink Floyd at the Palais de Versailles on 9 June 1988 promoting the launch of their new album *Delicate Sound of Thunder*.

a large portion of *Dark Side of the Moon*. As the tour developed and the set list evolved the album began to be played in its entirety.

With its mind boggling scale, technically perfect sound reproduction and dazzling combinations of mesmerising lights, lasers and film projections allied to brilliant music, the Division Bell tour could hardly fail to impress; but the written word simply cannot convey the awesome power of actually being present at these stunning concerts.

By turns, majestic, imposing, disturbing and exciting the Division Bell tour encompassed all that was great about Pink Floyd. The visual effects complimented and enhanced the music in such a perfect manner that the overall effect of the combination of the two was simply overwhelming. After this there was simply nowhere else to go: Floyd had achieved perfection.

THE MUSIC

Cluster One (Wright/Gilmour)
A very rare Wright/Gilmour writing credit kicks off an album which drummer Nick Mason claimed 'has more of the feel of *Meddle* than anything else we've done since.' This brilliant call and response composition is based on the wonderful interplay behind *Certainly*. Mason was again playing drums on most tracks although there was still some outside assistance from Gary Wallis. Wright's contributions on the album were pleasingly audible and distinctive. The simple three-note theme of *Cluster One* is unusual and carries the Floyd tradition of restraint to new levels by allowing the three notes to be repeated at a time when the listener's brain is screaming to fill in the fourth note to complete the suggested figure.

What Do You Want from Me (Music: Gilmour/Wright Lyrics: Gilmour/Samson)
The first Pink Floyd song to feature lyrics from newspaper journalist

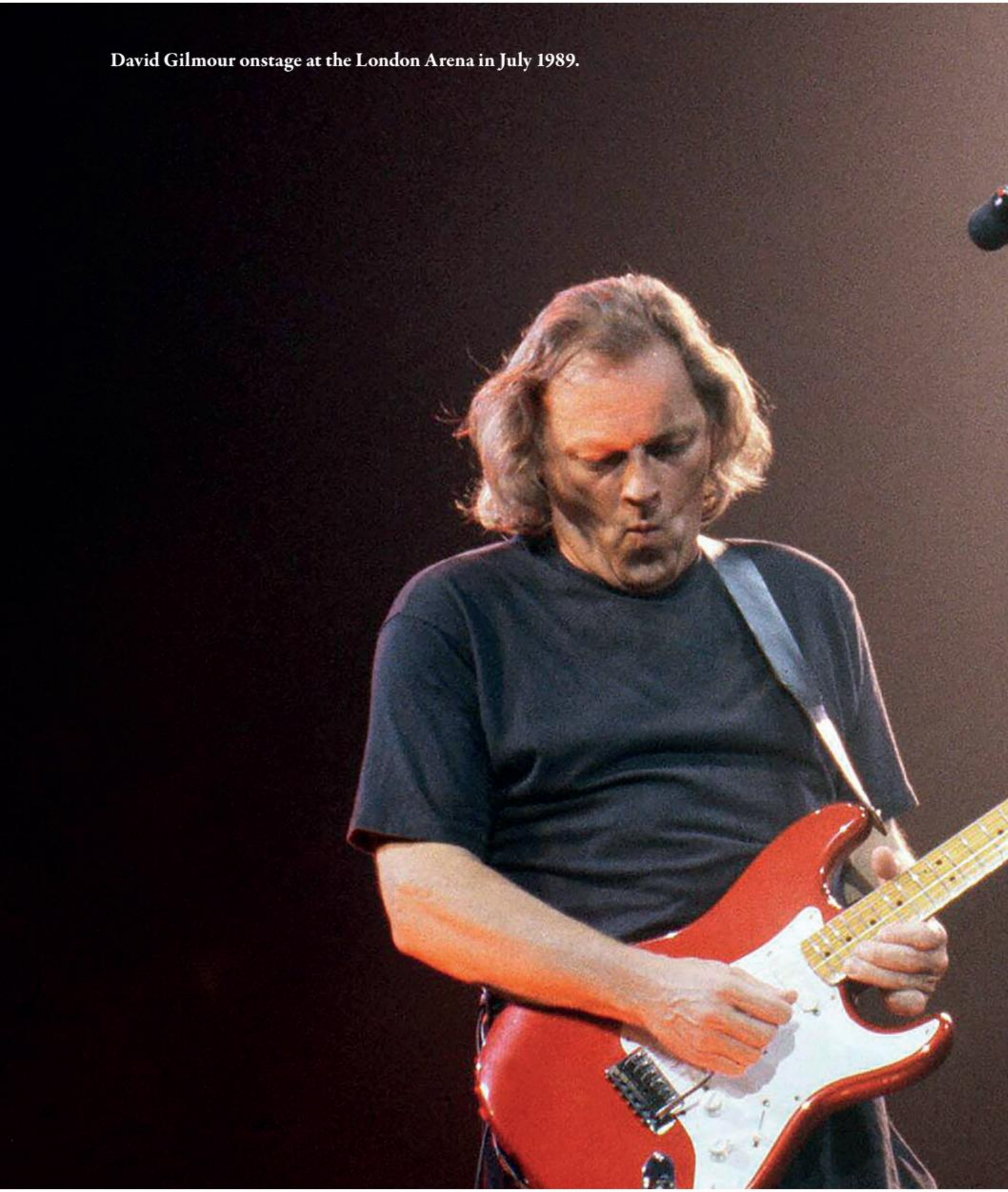
Polly Samson, now known as Mrs David Gilmour, though both she and Dave are credited; Gilmour and Wright wrote the music. Legend has it the title came from an early marital disagreement!

Poles Apart (Music: Gilmour – Lyrics: Gilmour / Samson / Laird-Clowes)
Assistance is rendered here from Nick Laird-Clowes, best known for his tenure as frontman with the Dream Academy. *Their Life in a Northern Town* was homage to the late, great Nick Drake, so can we assume the former colleague who has 'lost the light in your eyes' is Syd Barrett? 'Who knows?' says Gilmour, 'I like to let the lyrics speak for themselves.' And, of course, he didn't write them. Polly Samson identifies Syd in the first verse, Roger in the second.

Marooned (Music: Gilmour / Wright)
A moody instrumental that confirms co-writer Rick Wright was back and functioning as a fully paid-up Floyd member, having recorded *Momentary Lapse* as a session man. A track excerpt deservedly appeared on the best of album, *Echoes*, while the live version was played to back projections.

A Great Day for Freedom (Music: Gilmour – Lyrics: Gilmour / Samson)
Placed near the front of the running order for the 1994 tour, this quickly became a big fan favourite. To judge from the newspaper headline visible in the booklet, it was inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall. In response to relentless and rather crass questioning David Gilmour dismissed any connection with the Roger Waters Wall show at that venue, which was still fresh in the memory.

Wearing the Inside Out (Music: Wright – Lyrics: Moore)
Rick Wright's first totally self-written Floyd tune (with lyrics from Anthony Moore) also features the familiar saxophone of Dick Parry. Wright, Gilmour and backing singers share vocals on a song that may well be autobiographical but, for whatever reason, did not make it to



David Gilmour onstage at the London Arena in July 1989.

the live arena. This is possibly because this lightweight piece sounds uncannily like Canterbury rockers Caravan.

Take It Back (Music: Gilmour / Ezrin – Lyrics: Gilmour / Samson / Laird-Clowes)
Producer Bob Ezrin, who first got involved with the Floyd during *The Wall*, crops up in the writing credits of a song that was one of forty or so routined on Gilmour's houseboat studio on the Thames before coming to full fruition, a track which rapidly became an audience favourite when performed live and was the lead single from the album.

Coming Back to Life (Music: Gilmour)
Unusual in having a lyric composed by Dave Gilmour to match his music, this is a love poem to wife Polly Samson: 'The things you say and the things you do surround me.' Oh, and the 'dangerous but irresistible pastime' referred to 'is sex, obviously,' he confirms. Maybe we should draw the curtain and leave them to it!

Keep Talking (Music: Gilmour / Wright – Lyrics: Gilmour / Samson)
The lyrical thread that runs through *The Division Bell* is very much present here. Guest 'vocalist' is Professor Stephen Hawking of *A Brief History of Time* fame: Dave would use a Peter Frampton-style 'voicebox' to approximate the sound of Hawking on stage.

Lost for Words (Music: Gilmour – Lyrics: Gilmour / Samson)
If *How Do You Sleep* was Lennon's vitriolic note to McCartney, then this is widely interpreted as Gilmour's message to his former partner in song. The lyrics talk of offering to wipe the slate clean, only to be told to 'go fuck myself'. All such acrimony was finally buried among the friendship of the 2005 Live 8 concert.

High Hopes (Music: Gilmour – Lyrics: Gilmour/Samson)
Despite the seemingly optimistic title, the bell that tolls at the end of this track is an ominous portent – particularly given the decade of

non-recording that has followed. Gilmour describes its creation – in just one studio day – as 'a moment when something happens quickly and wonderfully.' The track was released as a double A Side with *Keep Talking*, but was not a major hit.

Floyd fans were delighted with the album, but the same cannot be said for the press. This review by David Bennun published in *Melody Maker* on 16 April 1994 sums up the condescending attitude of many of the reviews.

'At a secret moonlight ceremony in a small rural churchyard, the reviews editor threw back his cowl and presented to me, on a hempen cushion emblazoned with prisms, the new Pink Floyd album. "Take this, Brother" he intoned, "may it serve you well."

"I raised my right hand and gave him the ritual response."

"Will Thursday be OK?"

Onto the coven stereo it went and, bliss of bliss, the rumours were true. A return to the elegant melancholia of *Wish You Were Here*. Hanging in the air like far-off thunderclouds, a track to rank with the most fragrant of modern ambient. A dignified, descending piano phrase curlicued with the distilled anguish of David Gilmour's guitar. *Cluster One*. Magnificent. Unfortunate, then, that the remaining hour should bring all the joy of chewing on a bucket of gravel. This is the frustrating thing. Unlike his contemporaries, most of whom seem to have no clue as to what made their music good in the first place, Gilmour must have a clear idea why people who were but a twinkle in free love's eye when the Floyd were founded cherish those early 1970s soundscapes. The delicacy of the instrumental, Marooned, which paraphrases *Dark Side of the Moon* to just the right degree, is a dead give-away. It's as if he's dropping hints, amid the drear and desolate stodge that makes up most of the album, that he can still work magic.

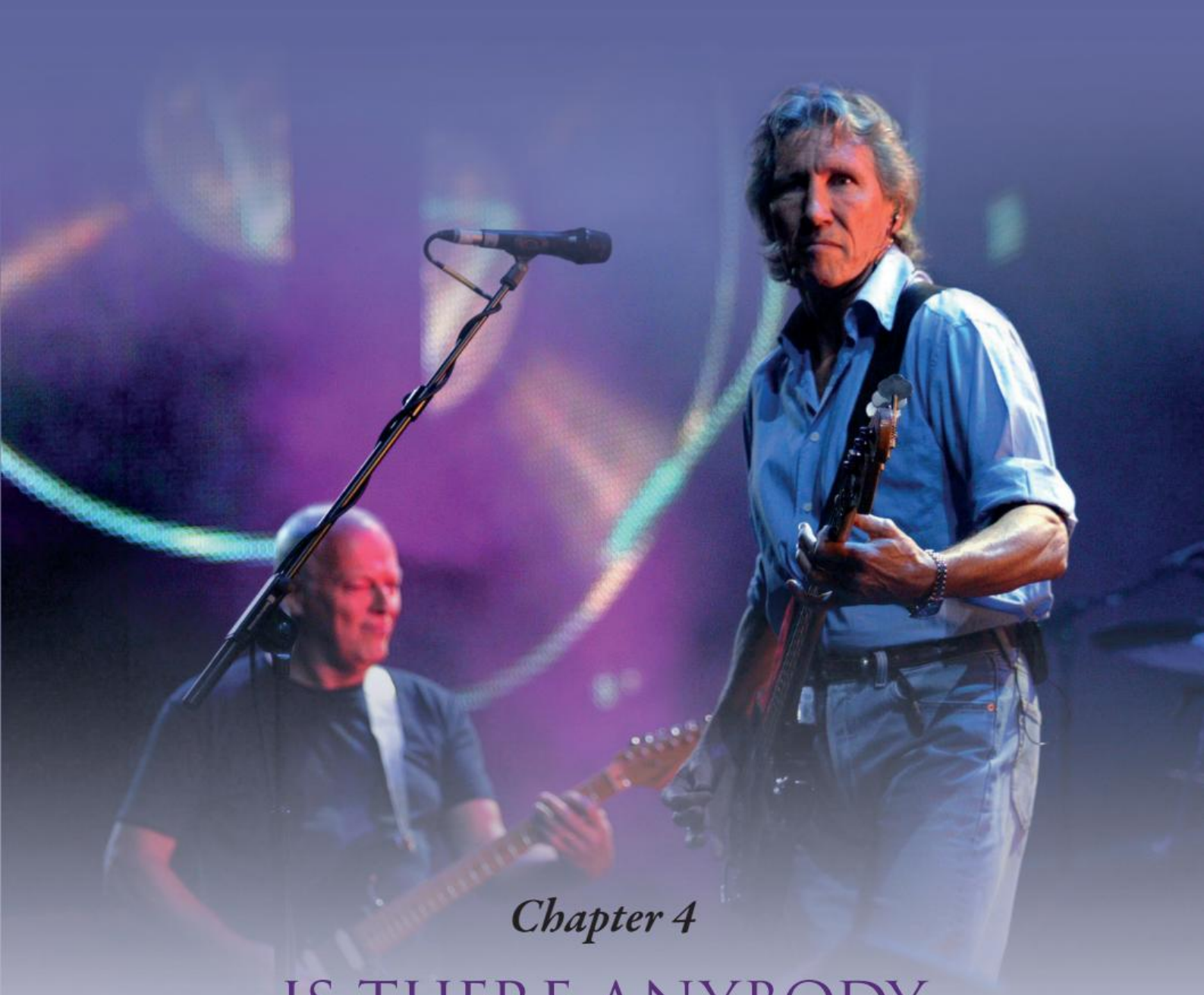
'It's only fair to point out, reading through the lyrics, that *The Division Bell* is a work of genuine gloom. Nobody could accuse

Gilmour of being self-satisfied. Bitter, morose and disillusioned, more like it. I say "reading through the lyrics" because you will quite possibly perish from boredom if you attempt to find this out by listening to the songs themselves. Next to *The Division Bell*, 1987's monumentally turgid Floyd comeback, *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*, sparkles in the memory as a refreshing fountain of light-headed verve. Stupid, I know, to expect any better. And infuriating that the album should bait us with the prospect of it. I can, it teases, but I won't. Sit down and eat your suet.

"No, thanks."'

By this stage in their career the odd bad review, even one as negative as that published in *Melody Maker*, could do nothing to affect the Pink Floyd juggernaut. To accompany the Division Bell tour there was the, now inevitable, live album and film, this time entitled *Pulse*. *Pulse* was an infinitely superior effort to *Delicate Sound of Thunder* in every respect. The music is of course flawless and in the film the stage presentation is mind blowing. For once the cameras come close to capturing some of that scale and grandeur of the awesome spectacle which was Floyd in concert. It is interesting to note that in the summer of 2005, *Pulse* was being revved up and fast tracked for a post-Live 8 DVD release while *Delicate Sound of Thunder* continues to lie unmolested in the vaults.

From a fan point of view there was little to set real life pulses racing over the new offering. These were all wonderfully recorded versions of songs which were flawlessly performed by a troupe of remarkably talented artistes, but it was something which had been heard countless times before. There seemed to be very little point in the live album beyond the desire on the part of the fans to be able to buy something with the Floyd name attached and the willingness of the label to sell it to them. Even the packaging, in all it's elaborate glory, doesn't quite hit the mark. There is a feeling that the whole thing was almost too perfect, too Floydian.



Chapter 4

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

From the very outset, Roger Waters had clearly detailed his plans for a *Wall* album, a *Wall* stage show and a *Wall* movie. At no point was there ever a mention of a live album. Then suddenly in the year 2000, without much of the usual fanfare, which surrounds these things there appeared a lavishly illustrated double boxed CD entitled *Is There Anybody Out There?*. Why this offspring of a broken marriage should suddenly appear after twenty years in the vaults is an interesting point. The collectors of course would obviously jump at the chance to

have a proper record of this important era in Floyd history; and it certainly put the brakes on *The Wall* bootleg industry, even if it was a generation too late. The real answer seems to lie in the straight forward commercial logic of the record companies. The huge Pink Floyd audience had been starved of new product since the release of *Pulse* in 1995 and with the band no longer active only live recordings were now available to slake the thirst for all things Floyd, the live tapes of *The Wall* presented a legitimate 'new' release which also provided an interesting historical document. In the process the fans got a genuinely fresh perspective on an album which had now grown so familiar.

Gerald Scarfe's original design for the album sleeve had been bold and iconic, but in the intervening years Storm Thorgeson had been shrewdly drafted back in to the fold to endorse the post-waters Floyd. As *The Wall* in all of its incarnations carried the visual stamp of Gerald Scarfe's design the question of who should design the packaging proved a thorny one. With David Gilmour now the de facto leader in the band Thorgerson was brought in to perform his usual Floyd task and produce the packaging. In his book *Mind Over Matter*, Storm recalled his ambivalent feelings on being asked to design the CD release. The mental questions he posed himself were exactly the same as those posed by the fans. 'I get to work on *The Wall*... Several questions might spring to mind: like why now? Why this and not a new studio album? Why something from the vaults? Would anybody buy such a thing? Who was behind it? Was Roger top man since it was largely his creation? Or was it David since it was a Pink Floyd project and Roger is no longer officially in the band... If you need a job to pay the rent, like me, then you don't ask too many of these questions out loud...'

For Roger Waters, the creation of his masterpiece had been a painful experience. Revisiting the work was equally painful. As old memories stirred he felt no satisfaction and merely growing unease as he explained to Sylvie Simmons for the *Mojo* feature designed to

accompany the album's release. 'Since this first upsurge of as-near-as-dammit communal Waters-Gilmour-Mason-Wright activity in the best part of two decades, the web has been buzzing with speculation of a thawing of tensions: a reunion; a millennium show; the Pyramids. "Ugh!" Roger Waters shudders. "The idea of having to stay in this big bowl of porridge swimming around – no, I'm going to get out, hose myself down, ah, that's better. Now I can get on with my life. The idea of getting involved with any of them again – and you can imagine, they're constantly trying to get me to leap back into the porridge – even doing this live album, the sleeve notes, it's brought it all back to me how crazy it all is. I don't want anything to do with it or them." His distaste is palpable.'

Roger was not alone in finding the process distasteful. Storm Thorgeson was soon confronted with the suffocating politics that seemed to surround the construction of every element of *The Wall*; even twenty years after it's creation. 'What was not so easy to settle, of course, was the politics. Roger was the progenitor, the author, and therefore his opinions were very important. He was not however in charge and could be outvoted if David and Nick decided to do so. David and Nick were respectful of Roger's authorship, but not if it turned to dictatorship.' Roger refused to talk with any of the others, but agreed that the record be released. He reluctantly accepted that I put the whole thing together, but wouldn't talk to me either. The respective managers (Mark Fenwick and Steve O'Rourke) did talk, but usually through expediency. Roger wanted pal Nick Sedgwick to organise the text (this was OK), wanted Gerald Scarfe involved (partially OK) and wanted credit listing like the concert programme (not OK).'

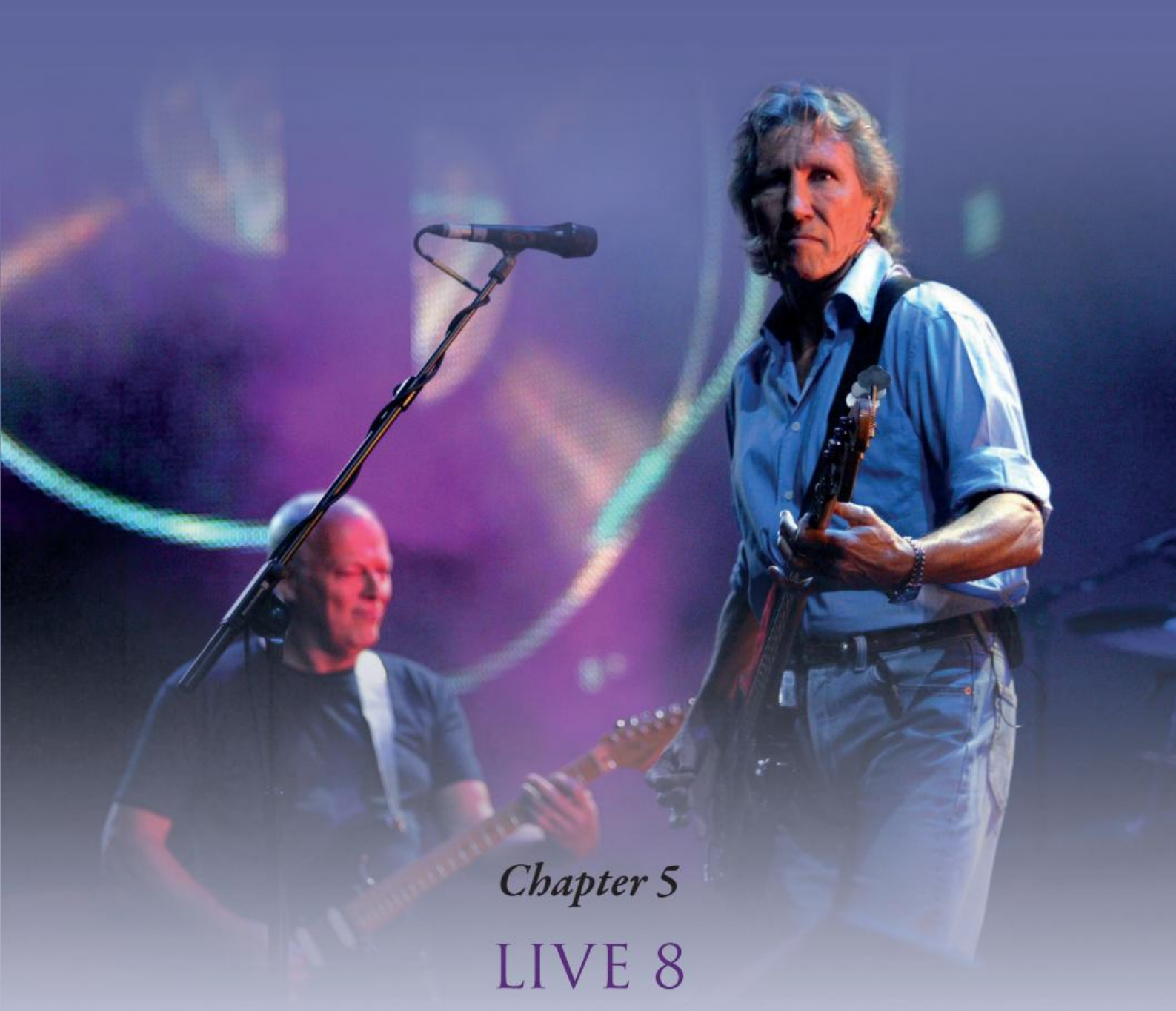
More diplomacy than design perhaps. Things were eventually agreed, but not before the album release was delayed.

Fortunately the four life masks, which had been created for the surrogate band, were still around and a compromise was finally reached when it was agreed that these relics would form the basis for

Pink Floyd onstage at London's Earls Court in October 1994 during the Division Bell tour. The band released the live album *Pulse* on 29 May 1995 to commemorate the tour.

the new sleeve design. 'Finally Roger agreed to the life masks that David and Nick already liked and which were used in the actual show by the surrogate band pretending to be Pink Floyd.'

As the old saying goes 'a camel is just a horse designed by a committee,' and the packaging for *Is There Anybody Out There?* definitely suffers from the presence of too many contrasting commands and viewpoints. There are elements of Scarfe present in the package transformed into 'wall paper' (geddit?) by Thorgeson and the overall effect is of an uneasy mix of the two styles. Since his return to the Floyd fold Thorgeson had been responsible for some amazing work which must rank as some of the best of his career; *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*, *The Delicate Sound of Thunder*, *The Division Bell*, *Pulse* and *Echoes* all benefited from world class designs. *Is There Anybody Out There?* unfortunately falls a long way short of the others and the confused chain of command cannot have helped matters.



Chapter 5

LIVE 8

In July 2005 the band re-united for the Live 8 performance. On the surface the whole event was purely about publicising the existence of poverty in Africa and lobbying governments for the forgiveness of debt. The motives of all of the parties involved in this huge global jamboree were slightly less clear. Puzzlingly tickets for the huge event were free which gave rise to the obvious questions over who actually paid for the event. The initial answer supplied by the press was that the money came from the sale of broadcast rights. The BBC were indeed championing the whole event and had given a huge chunk of their television and radio schedule over to Live 8. Only later did it emerge that the event

was in part subsidised by the pre-sale of the DVD rights to EMI. It was this link which made the whole event possible and at a stroke removed any potential contractual obstacle to a Pink Floyd appearance. The BBC were in effect providing a huge free platform for the political message, but they were also providing the biggest free advertising campaign for the DVD that followed in its wake. Originally scheduled for Christmas release (echoes of the *Do They Know It's Christmas* message) the release of the DVD was rushed forward to November 2005.

The concert itself provided a fantastic platform for EMI to parade its best selling artists including Paul Mcartney, Robbie Williams, Joss Stone and Cold Play. But none of them could even hope to come close to Pink Floyd. In the wake of Live 8, CD sales of all the artists taking part leapt by huge margins. Admittedly much of these sales were helped by the immediate support given to some albums such as the Joss Stone TV advertising campaign which followed in the immediate wake of Live 8 in conjunction with retailers such as Tesco. Even without the benefit of TV advertising, sales of Pink Floyd albums soared by an incredible 1300%. Much to the delight of the moguls at EMI *Echoes*, *Dark Side of the Moon* and *Wish You Were Here* all shot back into the charts. An even bigger hidden Live 8 windfall awaited the men in suits at EMI's various publishing interests. Publishing is the huge hidden iceberg of the music business. This is where the real money is made by publishers that represent the writers of a song and charge TV companies, film producers, advertisers and record labels to use the compositions owned by it's artists. As publishers of much of the material performed at Live 8, the good men and ladies who handled EMI's publishing interests were entitled to fees from television and radio stations all over the world. They were also entitled to their share of the dealer price for every single DVD, or CD sold which featured their repertoire.

Conscious of the obvious charge of profiteering from a noble cause which was fast becoming perceived as little more than a cynical

exercise in commercial exploitation, David Gilmour moved quickly to head off the cynics. The guitarist publicly proclaimed that he would be donating the results of this amazing windfall to charity and urged his fellow multi-millionaires on the Live 8 bill to do the same. Whether all the other artistes and corporate warriors chose to do the same is still awaiting clarification.

Although there was nothing at stake, Pink Floyd were able to produce a thrilling performance taking in two tracks from *Dark Side*, an exhilarating *Comfortably Numb* and a superb rendition of *Wish You Were Here*, a song from the album written in honour of the man who had started it all – Syd Barrett.

At the beginning of their performance of *Wish You Were Here*, Waters told the audience that the experience was 'quite emotional, standing up here with these three guys after all these years, standing to be counted with the rest of you... we're doing this for everyone who's not here, and particularly of course for Syd.' At the end, Gilmour thanked the audience and started to walk off the stage. Waters called him back, and the band shared a group hug. Images of the hug were a favourite among Sunday newspapers after Live 8. Waters said of their almost twenty years of animosity: 'I don't think any of us came out of the years from 1985 with any credit... It was a bad, negative time, and I regret my part in that negativity.'

Though Pink Floyd turned down a contract worth £136 million for a final tour, Waters did not rule out more performances, suggesting it ought to be for a charity event only. However, Gilmour told the Associated Press that a reunion would not happen: 'The [Live 8] rehearsals convinced me [that] it wasn't something I wanted to be doing a lot of... There have been all sorts of farewell moments in people's lives and careers which they have then rescinded, but I think I can fairly categorically say that there won't be a tour or an album again that I take part in. It isn't to do with animosity or anything like that. It's just... I've been there, I've done it.' In February 2006, Gilmour was interviewed for the Italian newspaper

'The only way artists can do things is to do it for themselves. Trying to second guess what the public wants or likes is kind of a fool's game.'
– David Gilmour

La Repubblica, which declared: 'Patience for fans in mourning. The news is official. Pink Floyd the brand is dissolved, finished, definitely deceased.' Asked about the future of Pink Floyd, Gilmour responded: 'It's over... I've had enough. I'm sixty years old... it is much more comfortable to work on my own.' Gilmour and Waters repeatedly also said that they had no plans to reunite.

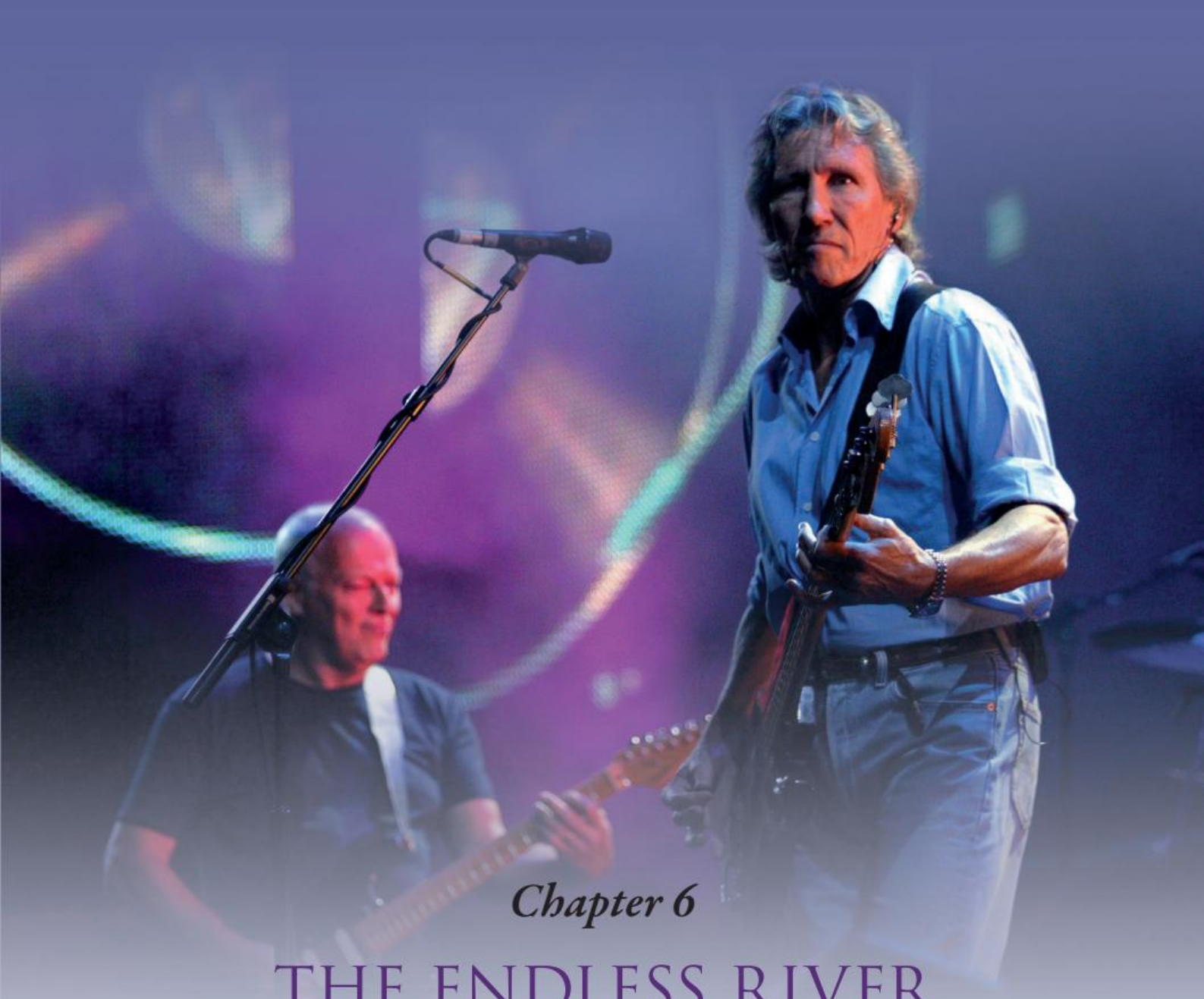
Tragically, only a year after the Live 8 reunion, founding member Syd Barrett died on 7 July 2006, at his home in Cambridge, aged sixty. His funeral was held at Cambridge Crematorium on 18 July 2006, with no Pink Floyd members in attendance. Wright said: 'The band are very naturally upset and sad to hear of Syd Barrett's death. Syd was the guiding light of the early band line-up and leaves a legacy which continues to inspire.' Although Barrett had faded into obscurity over the decades, the national press praised him for his contributions to music. On 10 May 2007, Waters, Gilmour, Wright and Mason performed at the Barrett tribute concert Madcap's Last Laugh at the Barbican Centre in London. Gilmour, Wright and Mason performed the Barrett compositions *Bike* and *Arnold Layne*, and Waters performed a solo version of his song *Flickering Flame*.

The next blow to Pink Floyd came two years later when Richard Wright died of an undisclosed form of cancer on 15 September 2008, aged sixty-five. His former bandmates paid tributes to his life and work; Gilmour said: 'In the welter of arguments about who or what was Pink Floyd, Rick's enormous input was frequently forgotten. He was gentle, unassuming and private but his soulful voice and playing were vital, magical components of our most recognised Pink Floyd sound.' A week after Wright's death, Gilmour performed *Remember a Day* from *A Saucerful of Secrets*, written and originally sung by Wright, in tribute to him on BBC Two's *Later... with Jools Holland*. Keyboardist Keith Emerson released a statement praising Wright as the backbone of Pink Floyd.

On 10 July 2010, Waters and Gilmour performed together at a charity event for the Hoping Foundation. The event, which raised

money for Palestinian children, took place at Kiddington Hall in Oxfordshire, England, with an audience of approximately two hundred. In return for Waters' appearance at the event, Gilmour performed *Comfortably Numb* at Waters' performance of *The Wall* at the London O2 Arena on 12 May 2011, singing the choruses and playing the two guitar solos. Mason also joined, playing tambourine for *Outside the Wall* with Gilmour on mandolin.

On 26 September 2011, Pink Floyd and EMI launched an exhaustive re-release campaign under the title *Why Pink Floyd...?*, reissuing the back catalogue in newly remastered versions, including *Experience* and *Immersion* multi-disc multi-format editions. The albums were remastered by James Guthrie, co-producer of *The Wall*. In November 2015, Pink Floyd released a limited edition EP, *1965: Their First Recordings*, comprising six songs recorded prior to *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*.



Chapter 6

THE ENDLESS RIVER

In 2012, Gilmour and Nick Mason decided to revisit the unused *Division Bell* recordings to make a new album, rerecording parts, adding new ones, and using modern studio technology. Gilmour said: 'With Rick gone, and with him the chance of ever doing it again, it feels right that these revisited and reworked tracks should be made available as part of our repertoire.' Only a small part of *The Big Spliff* was used.

These recordings formed *The Endless River* – the fifteenth studio album by the English rock band Pink Floyd, released in November 2014 by Parlophone Records in Europe and Columbia Records in the rest of the world.

Gilmour asked guitarist and producer Phil Manzanera, who co-produced his 2006 solo album *On an Island*, to work on the material. Manzanera, Jackson and engineer Damon Iddins spent six weeks assembling four fourteen-minute pieces. Gilmour gave two pieces to producer Youth, who added guitar and bass parts. In November 2013, Gilmour led sessions with Manzanera, Youth and Jackson to record material with Mason, saxophonist Gilad Atzmon and bassist Guy Pratt. Vocalists including Durga McBroom recorded backing vocals, and Gilmour recorded lead vocals on *Louder than Words*, with lyrics by his wife, author Polly Samson. Bassist and songwriter Roger Waters, who left Pink Floyd in 1985, was not involved.

Autumn '68, named in reference to the 1970 Pink Floyd song *Summer '68*, features a recording of Wright playing the Royal Albert Hall pipe organ during the rehearsal for a show on 26 June 1969. *Talkin' Hawkin'* contains a sample of scientist Stephen Hawking's speech taken from a British Telecom commercial also sampled for *The Division Bell* on *Keep Talking*. Mason received writing credits for *Sum*, and *Skins*, a two-and-a-half-minute drum solo. Gilmour said that he was 'pretty certain' that *The Endless River* would be the final Pink Floyd album.

The Endless River comprises four pieces, which form a continuous flow of mostly ambient and instrumental music. Gilmour said: 'Unapologetically, this is for the generation that wants to put its headphones on, lie in a beanbag, or whatever, and get off on a piece of music for an extended period of time. You could say it's not for the iTunes, downloading-individual-tracks generation.' Mason described the album as a tribute to Wright: 'I think this record is a good way of recognising a lot of what he does and how his playing was at the heart of the Pink Floyd sound. Listening back to the sessions, it really brought home to me what a special player he was.'

Louder Than Words is the only track with a lead vocal. Samson wrote the lyrics after observing the band's interaction during the

rehearsals for their 2005 Live 8 reunion, their first performance with Waters in over twenty-five years. She said: 'What struck me was, they never spoke... It's not hostile, they just don't speak. And then they step onto a stage and musically that communication is extraordinary.' The album title is taken from a lyric on the last track of *The Division Bell*, *High Hopes*: 'The water flowing/The endless river/For ever and ever.' Gilmour said it suggested a continuum between the records.

The Endless River cover art depicts a young man punting a Thames skiff across a sea of clouds towards the sun. After the death of longtime Pink Floyd artist Storm Thorgerson in 2013, Pink Floyd collaborated with Aubrey Powell, co-founder of Thorgerson's design company Hipgnosis. Powell discovered eighteen-year-old Egyptian artist Ahmed Emad Eldin and asked to use the concept from his piece *Beyond the Sky* for *The Endless Rive*r. Eldin was a Pink Floyd fan and accepted enthusiastically. Powell felt Ahmed's concept had 'an instant Floydian resonance', and described it as 'enigmatic and open to interpretation'. The final cover is a recreation of Eldin's work by London design firm Stylorouge. Powell felt that the cover summed up the title and music, and was appropriate for the recording on the Thames.

The Endless River was also released in boxed DVD and Blu-ray 'deluxe' editions, containing a twenty-four-page hardback book, postcards, and a bonus disc of three additional tracks and six music videos. Two tracks, *TBS9* and *TBS14*, are out-takes from *The Big Spliff*.

In terms of promotion for *The Endless River* Pink Floyd were affected by the sale of EMI to the Universal Music Group, which lasted from 2011 to 2013. The European Commission and the Federal Trade Commission approved the sale with conditions, including the sale of certain EMI assets. Pink Floyd, along with many other bands under the EMI roster, were transferred to different labels during the process. The Parlophone Label Group was formed under Parlophone as one of many assets to be sold off by Universal

Pink Floyd onstage at Live 8 on 2 July 2005. This performance was the first time in twety-four years that Mason, Gilmour, Wright, and Waters had shared a stage together.

following the acquisition of EMI, with Pink Floyd transferred to the Parlophone Label Group during the sale. The Warner Music Group, in 2013, struck a deal with Universal to buy the Parlophone label Group from EMI, acquiring publishing rights to Pink Floyd's back catalog and future releases in the process.

In a tweet on 5 July 2014, Samson released the album title and a projected release window of October 2014 to pre-empt a tabloid newspaper report. The announcement was followed by backing vocalist Durga McBroom posting a photo of her alongside Gilmour in the recording studio. Details about *The Endless River* were announced on Pink Floyd's website on 7 July.

Pink Floyd and Parlophone unveiled *The Endless River* on 22 September 2014, including the release date, artwork and track listing, accompanied by a promotional website, a hyperstitial for the Pink Floyd website. The site featured an artist's statement, photographs from the *Division Bel*l sessions, pre-order details and two teasers, one featuring a thirty-second snippet of *It's What We Do*, and a television advertisement, featuring the album's geometric-based artwork. Pre-orders on physical and digital formats started the same day. Prominent installations of the album's artwork were placed around the world, including a four-sided 8-metre-tall billboard placed in South Bank, London, and large-scale poster advertisements in cities such as Berlin, Paris, Los Angeles, Milan, New York and Sydney.

The album's only single, *Louder than Words*, premiered on Chris Evans' breakfast show on BBC Radio 2 as a shortened radio edit. Gilmour and Mason appeared in an interview for BBC Radio 6 Music to promote the album and to discuss Wright's contributions. The track *Allons-y (1)* was made available to download from the iTunes Store on 4 November 2014. In the week before release, *The Endless River* became the most pre-ordered album in Amazon UK's history; but sadly the following week, the record was broken by *III* by *Take That*. There was no Endless River Tour, as Gilmour said stated that it would be impossible without Wright.

The critical reception for *The Endless River* was very mixed. Ludovic Hunter-Tilney of *Financial Times* praised the nostalgic 'Floydian' sound, reminiscent of Pink Floyd's work prior to *The Wall*, and wrote: 'How fitting that a band so accustomed to loss should close their account with an engrossing elegy to their own past.' Cameron Cooper of *The Music* gave the album three-and-a-half out of five, writing that it felt 'less like a swansong and more like a final homage... the lack of vocals gives the music more freedom, allowing it to speak for itself.' In *The Guardian*, Alexis Petridis described it as 'not a new album from an extant band, but an echo from the past – or a last, warm but slightly awkward group hug... on those terms, it works just fine.' He praised the lead single and final track *Louder than Words* as 'stately, poignant and open-hearted'. In *Rolling Stone*, David Fricke wrote: 'Wright was the steady, binding majesty in the Floyd's explorations. This album is an unexpected, welcome epitaph.' *The Observer* wrote that the album is 'an understated affair but unmistakably the Floyd... a pretty good way to call it a day.'

J.C. Maçek of *PopMatters* wrote: 'Without the vocals, something is very clearly missing and the listener is left wanting more. While this makes for a good album, *The Endless River* is not quite fitting to serve as the final album of the greatest rock band of their kind, to say nothing of one of the greatest rock bands of any kind ever to perform.' Andy Gill of *The Independent* called it 'just aimless jamming, one long thread of Dave Gilmour's guitar against Rick Wright's pastel keyboards and Nick Mason's tentative percussion, with nary a melody of any distinction alighted upon for the duration... without the sparking creativity of a Syd or Roger, all that's left is ghastly faux-psychedelic dinner-party muzak.' *The NME* wrote that *The Endless River* was 'a collection of spruced-up outtakes ... On those limited terms it works well enough, and it's interesting from a certain geeky perspective, but it's never quite as satisfying or substantial as you want it to be.' *Pitchfork* wrote that *The Endless River* 'is quintessentially and self-consciously Pink Floyd, for better

or for worse... it proves to be one of the few Pink Floyd releases that sounds like a step backwards, with nothing new to say and no new frontiers to explore.' Mikael Wood of the *Los Angeles Times* called it 'so excruciatingly dull (even by Pink Floyd's often-dull standards) that the band's name on the cover feels like a straight-up bait-and-switch'.

Despite the mixed feelings of critics, *The Endless River* debuted at No. 1 on the UK Albums Chart, with sales totalling 139,351 the third highest opening sales week of 2014, making it Pink Floyd's sixth UK No. 1. As of 27 November 2014, the vinyl edition had sold 6,000 copies, making it the fastest-selling UK vinyl release of 2014 and the fastest-selling since 1997. The album also debuted at No. 1 in several other countries, including France, Germany, Portugal, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, New Zealand, and Canada. In the US, it debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard 200 with 170,000 copies sold in its first week; by January 2015, it had sold 355,000 copies there. Worldwide, *The Endless River* sold over 2.5 million copies in 2014.

Pink Floyd themselves have stated that *The Endless River* is to be viewed as a complete work, as opposed to individual tracks and is therefore unsuitable for track-by-tack analysis. However we conclude that the album is a fitting end to a sterling career (if indeed it is the end). It contains the musical essence that is so quintessential to the band, and we are grateful to still be receiving content after all these years.

Speaking of *The Endless River* Gilmour, stated: 'I think we have successfully commandeered the best of what there is... It's a shame, but this is the end.' In 2015, Gilmour reiterated that Pink Floyd were 'done' and that to reunite without Wright would be wrong.The view that Pink Floyd are over was supported by Mason who said in 2018 that Gilmour and Waters continued to be 'at loggerheads'.

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On 13 December 2019, Pink Floyd released the box set, *The Later Years 1987–2019*. The box contains a 5.1 surround mix of *The Endless River* set to a film by Ian Emes; artwork related to the album; and previously unreleased tracks from *The Division Bell* sessions, including *Nervana*. Also included are the *Louder than Words* video, a video of the album's launch party, and the electronic press kit. Also included is a remixed version of *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* with more contributions by Wright and Mason, and an expanded reissue of the live album *Delicate Sound of Thunder*.

In 2018, Mason formed a new band, Nick Mason's Saucerful of Secrets, to perform Pink Floyd's early material. The band includes Gary Kemp of Spandau Ballet and longtime Pink Floyd collaborator Guy Pratt. They toured Europe in September 2018 and North America in 2019. Waters joined the band at the New York Beacon Theatre to perform vocals for *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun*.

Whilst there has been no news from the Pink Floyd camp in a while, fans still hold dear hopes for further material and reunions. Regardless of what may come, what Pink Floyd have left behind is a vast legacy. As one of the UK's first psychedelic music groups, Pink Floyd changed the face of music as we know it, influencing more musical acts than it would be possible to list. Every year their timeless music ushers in new fans, and their incredible catalogue of work will never be forgotten.

PINK FLOYD

THE FINAL CUT TO THE ENDLESS RIVER

MUSIC LEGENDS